THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) At present, 481 Rail Travellers' Service Agents including 22 in Gujarat State are functioning on the railways. No Rail Travellers' Service Agents has been appointed in backward/rural/tribal areas of Gujarat;

(b) to (e) Appointment of Rail Travellers' Service Agents is done by the Zonal Railways in accordance with the statutory rules "Authorisation of Rail Travellers' Service Agents Rules, 1985" whenever the Zonal Railways feel the need to appoint travel agents at a particular station depending upon the volume of reservation work handled at that station. For this purpose applications are called for through press advertisements and the agents are selected as per the requirements fixed by the railways for a particular place.

[English]

Beedi Workers

881. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to provide subsidy/financial relief to the people involved in Beedi Industries who are facing serious threat for their survival due to Government's unscientific policy towards this small scale industry; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) and (b) Government have introduced various schemes for providing subsidy and loans to beedi workers for their housing, medical treatment including hospitalisation, educational and recreational needs. Moreover, the beedi manufacturing units which are registered as small scale industries, are also entitled for Central/State Government incentives, concessions and facilities as are available to SSI Units.

The Government have enacted several labour laws like the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment Act, 1966; Minimum Wages Act, 1948 etc. which are applicable to beedi workers and protect their interests. In addition, there are several antipoverty and employment generation programmes for the rural and urban poor including beedi workers, being implemented by the Government.

[Translation]

Provide Telephone Facilities in Basia in Bihar

882. SHRI LALIT ORAON : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to provide telephone service in Basia Divisional Headquarters of Gumla district in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have received any application/representation in this regard; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) 128-P C-DOT Exchange is proposed to be opened in Basia in 1997-98.

(c) Yes Sir.

(d) Action is being taken as indicated in (b) above.

[English]

Bailadila Mines

883. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) the latest position in regard to the mining of iron-ore in the Bailadila region by M/s. Nippon Denro;

(b) whether the proposal to handover one of the NMDC iron-ore mines to this private company is still under consideration; and

(c) if so, the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (c) Based on the Government approval, NMDC signed a joint venture agreement with Nippon Denro Ispat Limited (NDIL) on 10th July, 1995 and a new Joint Venture (JV) Company namely Bailadila Mineral Development Company Ltd. (BMDC) was incorporated on 31st July, 1995. Care has been taken to ensure that the JV agreement provides for all the safeguards required to protect not only the interest of NMDC but also the local tribal people. Further, NMDC submitted its application to the Government of Madhya Pradesh for transfer of 11-B mining lease in favour of the JV company.

As per the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 (MMRD Act), the State Governments have been empowered to grant, renew or transfer prospecting licences as well as mining leases for various minerals, since they are the deemed owners of the mineral property. However, in respect of minerals listed in First Schedule to the Act, which include iron ore, the State Governments are required to obtain prior approval of the Central Government for grant, renewal or transfer of prospecting licences or mining leases in respect of the scheduled minerals.

The Government of Madhya Pradesh recommended the proposal vide their letter dated 6.1.96 and sought prior approval of the Central Government from the Ministry of Mines, as required under the provisions of the MMRD Act, 1957, for transfer of mining lease of Bailadila Deposit 11-B in favour of the JV Company. While seeking the Central Government approval, the

State Government also proposed to incorporate certain conditions such as setting up of a Steel plant, involvement of the State Government in the equity of the JV Company to the extent of 20%, recruitment of manpower from the State especially from District Bastar, establishment of schools/hospital in the area by the JV Company etc. The Ministry of Mines have approved the proposal on 21st March, 1996 subject to observance of the provisions of MMRD Act, 1957 and Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 and also that "the State Government, the proposed joint venture company, i.e., Bailadila Mineral Development Company Ltd. and NMDC should arrive at a uniform and agreed set of conditions for the transfer and incorporate them in an agreement or any other appropriate legal instrument that may be executed between the parties".

Ministry of Mines vide their letter dated 13.6.96 requested Government of Madhya Pradesh to inform whether NMDC has consented to the conditions that the State Government proposed to incorporate under Rule 27(3) of the MCR, 1960.

The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has requested Ministry of Steel vide their letter dated 19.6.96 and 3.8.96 to advise NMDC to send their consent on the conditions proposed by the State Government.

The Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta granted a stay order on the decision to transfer the lease of 11-B iron ore mines in favour of joint venture company on 16.4.96 on a public interest petition filed by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Jibon Roy, Members of Parliament. The writ petition had been dismissed by the Hon'ble High Court on grounds of jurisdiction on 10.5.1996. However, the operation of the order was stayed by the Hon'ble High Court for a period of three weeks upto 31.5.1996. On a petition by the JV Company against this order, the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court has ordered that the interim stay granted by the learned trial judge will remain suspended till the disposal of the appeal preferred by the Company and the appeal preferred by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta against the order dismissing the original writ petition of jurisdiction grounds. These appeals are to come up before the regular bench.

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has also been filed in the High Court of Delhi in July, 1996 against the transfer of Bailadila Deposit 11-B. The petition came up for hearing on 14.10.96. The case was adjourned to 29.10.96 to be placed before a different bench. However, the case was not listed on the said date. The case was again listed on 6.11.96. M/s. Bailadila Mineral Development Company Ltd. moved an application for being impleaded as a party. The application was allowed. After hearing the case on 18.2.97, it has now been adjourned to 26.3.97 for next hearing.

The stand taken by the Government is that the subject is very important and needs detailed examination on various aspects. However, since the matter is pending before the Court, the Government would like to await the judicial verdict.

Accidents in Industrial Establishments In Bihar

884. SHRI THOMAS HANSDA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of accidents in industrial establishments in Bihar during the last three years;

(b) whether the Government have issued instructions to industrial establishments in the State to provide adequate safety as well as to check recurrence of such accidents therein; and

(c) if so, the name of industrial establishments which have adopted these safety measures and results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) According to the available information, the number of accidents which took place in industrial establishments in Bihar during 1993, 1994 are as under :

Year	number of accidents
1993	2674
1994	1532

Information for 1995 is not yet available.

(b) and (c) Safety measures required to be taken to check occurence of accidents have been laid down in the Factories Act, 1948 and the Rules framed there under. All industrial establishments are required to follow the same.

[Translation]

Child Labour

885. SHRI CHINTAMAN WANAGA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government have been drawn to the news-item captioned "Government sleeping over growing child labour menance" appearing in the "Hindustan Times" dated December 13, 1996;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for elimination of child labour?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State Government have taken a number of steps to prevent the type of accident which took place in the unregistered fire work unit named M.P. Fire works at Begnan, Howrah on 11.9.95. Inspectors appointed under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 have been directed by the State Government to be more vigilant in order to (i) find lapses/violation by the registered factories; (ii) find out unregistered